



SUPPORT YOUR CHILD'S SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

As a parent of a young teen, you are beginning to see your child become a young adult. These are critical years that will affect both their current and future health at home, in school and in life.

WHY IT MATTERS

Your child's social and emotional development affects every part of his or her life. Children who develop good social and emotional skills:

- Make and keep friends
- Understand and express emotions
- Are ready for school
- Think clearly and learn new things

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Your love and attention are as important as food and a place to live. When you communicate and connect with your child and praise good behavior, you're supporting your child's social and emotional development — and building a foundation for a lifetime of success.

INSIDE YOU'LL LEARN ABOUT:

- Social and emotional milestones for your child
- How to support your child's social and emotional development
- When to be concerned
- Where to go for help

WHEN TO BE CONCERNED

- Changes in behavior or mood— restlessness, nervousness, paranoia, irritability, defensiveness, or lack of interest in appearance or activities.
- Changes in friends— switching friends and being reluctant to introduce you to new friends.
- Problems at school or at home— poor attendance, drop in grades, or rebelling against rules.
- Changes in sleep or appetite.

HOW TO GET HELP

If you have concerns, talk to your doctor. Your pediatrician or family doctor can provide health information, developmental and medical health screenings and referrals.

**OMH CUSTOMER RELATIONS:
800-597-8481**

CONTACT YOUR LOCAL OMH FIELD OFFICE:

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|-------------------------------|----------------|
| Central New York Field Office | (315) 426-3930 |
| Hudson River Field Office | (845) 454-8229 |
| Long Island Field Office | (631) 761-2886 |
| NYC Field Office | (212) 330-1650 |
| Western New York Field Office | (716) 533-4075 |



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suicidepreventionlifeline.org



Office of
Mental Health

Promoting Your Child's Social and Emotional Development

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS OF TWELVE TO FIFTEEN YEAR-OLDS



**BUILDING HEALTHY FOUNDATIONS
FOR A LIFETIME OF SUCCESS**

| 12 TO 15 YEAR-OLDS | EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL | THINKING AND LEARNING |
|--|---|---|
| <p>WHAT TO EXPECT</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show more concern about body image, looks, and clothes • Focus on themselves; waiver between self-assured and lack of confidence • Experience more moodiness • Show more interest in and influence by peer group • Express less affection toward parents; sometimes rude or short-tempered • Feel stress from more challenging school work • Develop eating problems • Experience sadness or depression—grades can suffer, potential for alcohol/ drug use, unsafe sexual activity, and other problems | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have more ability for complex thought • Be better able to express feelings through talking • Develop a stronger sense of right and wrong |
| <p>WHAT YOU CAN DO: POSITIVE PARENTING TIPS</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be honest and direct with your teen when talking about sensitive subjects such as drugs, drinking, smoking, and sex • Meet and get to know your teen’s friends • Show an interest in your teen’s school life • Help your teen make healthy choices while encouraging him to make his own decisions • Respect your teen’s opinions and take into account her thoughts and feelings—it is important that s/he knows you are listening to her | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When there is a conflict, be clear about goals and expectations (like getting good grades, keeping things clean, and showing respect), but allow your teen input on how to reach those goals (like when and how to study or clean) • Encourage your teen to make good decisions about what she posts on social media and the amount of time she spends on these activities— monitoring your child’s online presence is important for her safety • Help your child set his own goals—encourage him to think about skills and abilities he would like to have and about how to develop them • Make clear rules and stick to them—talk with your child about what you expect (behavior) when no adults are present; If you provide reasons for rules, it will help your child to know what to do in most situations |
| <p>HOW TO STAY HEALTHY</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure your teen wears a seatbelt—motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death among 12 to 14 year-olds • Your teen should wear a helmet when riding a bike, a skateboard or using skates, riding on a motorcycle, snowmobile, all-terrain vehicle, or playing contact sports—traumatic brain injuries from these types of activities are common and can be prevented • Talk with your teen about the dangers of drugs, drinking, smoking, and risky sexual activity—share your thoughts and feelings and listen, answer questions honestly and directly • Talk with your teen about the importance of having friends who are interested in positive activities—encourage her to avoid peers who pressure her to make unhealthy choices • Know where your teen is and whether an adult is present—make a clear plan that your teen needs to call to check in—make sure you know where he is going to be and when he will be home | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set clear rules for your teen when she is home alone—having friends at the house, how to handle situations that can be dangerous (emergencies, fire, drugs, sex, etc), completing homework or household tasks • Encourage your teen to be physically active—join a team, participate in an individual sport or help with household tasks • Keep television sets and computers out of your teen’s bedroom • Meal time is very important for families—eating together helps teens make better choices about the foods they eat, promotes healthy weight, and gives your family members time to talk with each other • Children today are exposed, through the media and their peers, to many issues dealing with violence, sexuality, and substance abuse—discuss these issues openly with your children to share concerns or correct misconceptions—you may need to set limits to ensure children will be exposed to certain issues only when they are ready |

YOUR CHILD DEPENDS ON YOU

It is important to take care of yourself, too. Talk to your doctor if you:

- Feel tired, depressed, worried or overwhelmed, and these feelings don’t go away
- Don’t enjoy spending time with your child
- Are having a hard time with your own emotions and relationships
- Witnessed violence or had a traumatic experience

